DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 091 825 EA 006 179

AUTHOR Parsons, G. Llewellyn
TITLE Review of Related Research Literature on Educational Supervision.
INSTITUTION Memorial Univ., St. John's (Newfoundland).
PUB DATE Oct 71
NOTE 17p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Personnel; Administrator Evaluation; Administrator Role; *Educational Research; Elementary Schools; *Literature Reviews; Principals; Role Perception; School Organization; Secondary Schools; *Supervision; *Supervisors; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teachers

ABSTRACT

Although a large number of studies on supervision have been redundant, some important empirical knowledge has been gained from research in this area. Gwaltney, Andburg, Blumberg, Weber and Amidon, and Marquit have studied the differing perceptions of supervisory behavior by teachers, supervisors, and administrators. Gross and Herriot and later Goldman and Heald have identified specific aspects of administration and supervisory behavior which have considerable impact on teachers' attitudes toward general supervisory and administrative behavior patterns. Trask and Croft have described the state of supervisory practices in certain districts and the adaptations made by teachers and principals to supervisory expectations. Ziolkowski attempts to determine differences in supervisory practices in schools rated high on teacher effectiveness and in those rated low on teacher effectiveness. More recently, Wilson and his associates, in studying supervision from a sociological point of view, have developed a new concept of supervision--comprehensive planning. The research objectives and findings of these and other studies are reported in this review. (Author/DN)

ED 091825

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Memorial University of Newfoundland

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

LITERATURE ON EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

By

GEORGE LLEWELLYN PARSONS

Department of Educational Administration

October, 1971

EA 006 179

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH LITERATURE ON EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

Introduction

Although a large number of studies on supervision has been redundant[1] some important empirical knowledge has been gained from research in this area. Gwaltney, Sandburg, Blumberg, Weber and Amidon, and Marquit[2] have studied the differing perceptions of supervisory behavior by teachers, supervisors and administrators. Gross and Herriot and later Goldman and Heald have identified specific aspects of administration and supervisory behavior which have the considerable impact upon teachers' attitudes toward their general supervisory and administrative behavior patterns. Trask and Croft have described the state of supervisory practices in certain districts and the adaptations made by teachers and principals to supervisory expectations. Ziolkowski has conducted an important piece of research to determine differences in supervisory practices in schools rated high on teacher effectiveness and in those rated low on teacher effectiveness. More recently, Wilson and his associates in studying supervision from a sociological point of

---

[1] Arnold J. Falusi and John C. Croft, "The Non-behavior of Supervisors". A paper presented to the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, California, February 7, 1969, P. 2.

[2] These and other research findings related to this study are reported on the pages following.

view, have developed a new concept of supervision - that of comprehensive planning.

A brief review of the research and literature relevant to this study follows.

The Falusi Study, 1968[3]

In 1968, Falusi selected a random sample of 100 studies on supervision and analyzed them using the following classification:

(1) Object - the person or supervisory role under consideration,

(2) mode - the characteristic of the object being considered,

(3) task - level at which the object is being considered,

(4) source - the observer,

(5) viewpoint - the point of view from which the object is being observed.

Of the 966 items of information found in the 100 studies, 89.3% or 863 items were found to be redundant. Falusi concluded:

(1) There is too much repetition in research on supervision: "It seems that any twenty studies on supervision will yield the entire knowledge on the subject."[4]

(2) Instead of a large body of empirical knowledge about supervision, Falusi found many studies of the 'non-behavior' of supervisors.

(3) "It appeared that experts knew what supervisors should do, and investigators went about attempting to discover if supervisors were doing these things."[5]

---

[3]Arnold Falusi, "An Integration of Concepts from Empirical Studies on Supervisory Behavior." (Unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of Educational Administration, University of Toronto), 1968.

[4]Falusi and Croft, p. 9.

[5]Falusi, p. 47.

A re-examination of the studies selected by Falusi shows that thirty-four per cent of them dealt with the supervisory role and behavior of principals; thirty per cent examined supervisory behavior in general, sixteen per cent focused on specific supervisory roles besides that of the principal (e.g., the role of curriculum leader, consultant, department head); ten per cent dealt with supervising - teachers and student-teaching while the remaining ten per cent of the studies analyzed administrative roles.

The Gwaltney Study, 1963[6]

The main purpose of the study was to analyze the role of "the elementary supervisor" and attempt to discover whether 'the elementary supervisor's perception of his role differed significantly from superintendents' and teachers' perceptions of his role'. Gwaltney concluded that

(1) The major portion of the 'elementary supervisor's' role is administrative. He is 'in charge of' the total elementary program and in the administrative chart is directly under the district superintendent and is responsible to him.

(2) "There was concensus between superintendents and supervisors concerning the accuracy of perception of the elementary supervisory role by referent groups."[7]

---

[6]Thomas Marion Gwaltney, Jr. "Selected Aspects of the Perception of the Role of General Elementary Supervisor by the Role Incumbent and Two Referent Roles in Selected School Districts of Missouri", (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University), 1963.

[7]Gwaltney, p. 101.

(3) Although there were significant differences concerning perception of the actual supervisory role, a rather high degree of concensus exists among the three major professional groups of supervisors, superintendents and teachers concerning what the supervisory role ideally should be.

The Sandberg Study, 1963[8]

In a study of effective supervisory techniques as perceived by beginning teachers and supervisors Sandberg found:

1. Disagreement between supervisors and beginning teachers over the value of determining
   a) the extent to which books and instructional materials were being used,
   b) the completeness of lesson plans,
   c) the extent to which prescribed courses of study were being used,
   d) what constituted efficient pupil control,
   e) the effective use of bulletin boards and other visual aids.
2. Beginning teachers felt too many new materials such as curriculum guides and courses of study were presented to them at one time.
3. Beginning teachers felt that supervisors' participation in faculty meetings to share new ideas and methods was effective.
4. Ninety-five per cent of the techniques dealing with the supervisory conference was rated as effective by both beginning teachers and supervisors.

---

[8]Herbert Holmes Sandberg, "Beginning Teachers and Supervisors' Appraisals of Selected Supervisory Techniques" (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, 1963).

The Blumberg and Amidon Study, 1964[9]

The purpose of the study was to discover teachers' perceptions of the supervisory conference and to relate these perceptions to teachers' evaluations of the productivity of the conference. For the purposes of the study, direct supervisory behavior was defined operationally as "giving information or opinion, giving directions or commands, and giving criticisms," while indirect supervisory behavior was defined as "accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting ideas and asking questions". Teachers perceived the supervisors to be most productive when they engaged in indirect supervisory behavior. The teachers perceived themselves as learning more about themselves when the supervisor used both indirect and direct supervisory behavior.

The Blumberg, Weber, Amidon Study[10]

It was the aim of this study to examine the following aspects of supervisor-teacher interactions:

1. The supervisors' perceptions of their own behavior and teachers' perceptions of the supervisors' behavior.
2. The perceptions of the teachers' attitude toward the interaction that takes place in the supervisory conference.
3. The kind and amount of learning supervisors think teachers get by way of supervision and the kind and amount teachers say they get.
4. The degree of overall productivity of supervisory interaction as seen by supervisors and as seen by teachers.

---

[9]Arthur Blumberg and Edmund Amidon, "Teacher Perceptions of Supervisor-Teacher Interaction," (Administrator's Notebook, XIV, No. 1 September, 1965).

[10]Arthur Blumberg, Wilfred Weber and Edmund Amidon, "Supervisor Interaction as seen by Supervisors and Teachers." (A paper presented at the Annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association, New York, February, 1967.)

The results of the study:

(1) Supervisors see themselves as being less direct in their behavior toward teachers than teachers perceive them to be.

(2) Teachers perceive themselves as learning less from supervisors than the supervisors thought they were learning.

(3) Supervisors have a brighter view of the results of their efforts than teachers have of the results of the supervisors' efforts. (The person who is in the higher position tends to see things differently and more positively than do those in subordinate positions.)

(4) Teachers see themselves in a situation where they are less free to initiate discussion than their supervisors thought.

The Marquit Study[11]

The purpose of this study was to compare teachers' and principals' perceptions of supervisory stimuli as principals attempted to bring about the overall improvement of instruction and to relate these perceptions to factors such as age, experience, and tenure of the teacher and size of school.

Marquit found the following:

(1) Principals perceived themselves as providing supervisory stimuli more frequently than did their teachers perceive them as doing so. Overall, teachers perceived their principals as "rarely" or "sometimes" providing supervisory stimuli, while principals perceived themselves as "often" providing supervisory stimuli.

(2) As their ages increase, teachers tended to score higher on their perception of the principals' supervisory stimuli.

---

[11] Lawrence J. Marquit, "Perceptions of the Supervisory Behavior of Secondary School Principals." (A paper presented at the 1968 Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, Feb. 7-10, 1968.)

Marquit states:

> For the most part, the highest means were attained by the 50-59 years age group of teachers. The lowest scores were obtained by the 30 years age group.... One possible reason for this outcome may be that maturity is accompanied by an increased sensitivity toward human behaviors, and could contribute towards teachers' awareness of supervisory behaviors.[12]

(3) As their experience increased, teachers tended to score higher on their perceptions of the principal's supervisory stimuli.

(4) Teachers' perception of supervisory stimuli scores tended to increase with increase in school size and increased preparation for teaching.

(5) Tenured teachers tended to score significantly higher on perceptions of supervisory stimuli than did non-tenured teachers.

The Gross and Herriot Study, 1964[13]

Gross and Herriot in their study of the staff leadership in public schools measured the Executive Professional Leadership of Principals which they defined as the extent to which principals conform to the role which teachers feel they ought to fulfill. It was derived by asking each teacher to evaluate his principal's behavior with regard to twelve statements, and then assigning a numerical value to each answer. Scores were assigned to each statement ranging from one to six. The more positive the answer given, the greater the numerical value. The average score for each teacher on the twelve items was called the Executive Professional Leadership Score.

In the study, Gross and Herriot (besides finding positive

---

[12] Marquit, p. 19.

[13] Neal Gross and Robert E. Herriot. Staff Leadership in Public Schools: A Sociological Inquiry. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965).

relationships between Executive Professional Leadership Scores and staff morale, professional performance of teachers' and pupils' learning) found strong relationships between Executive Professional Leadership and the following:

(1) Perceived Support of Teacher Authority - the extent to which teachers perceived their principals as being supportive of their authority.

(2) Perceived Level of Staff Involvement - the extent to which teachers perceived themselves as being involved in the decision-making process of the school.

(3) Perceived Level of Social Support - the degree to which the teachers perceived their principals as being individuals who understand and support their positions.

On the basis of this research Gross and Herriot concluded that the following may stand in the way of a principal's serving as leader of his professional staff:-

(1) his unwillingness to allow the teachers to participate in decisions about central school issues,

(2) his stress on bureaucratic relationship to teachers,

(3) his unwillingness to offer social support to teachers,

(4) his failure to stand behind the teachers when their authority is questioned.[14]

According to the researchers, the findings show also that "a professional staff may perform more, not less, effectively when its administrators attempt to influence it."[15]

---

[14] Gross and Herriot, p. 155.

[15] Ibid., p. 162.

The Goldman and Heald Study, 1966[16]

The purpose of Goldman and Heald's study was "to determine which specific aspects of the administrator's total behavioral pattern have the greatest impact on teachers' attitudes toward that behavioral pattern".[17] The study is, in part, a replication of the Gross and Herriot Principalship Study in that the researchers attempt to find the relationships between the dependent variable , Executive Professional Leadership, which "represents a measure of a teacher's evaluation of the total behavioral pattern of his principal", and five specific aspects of administrative behavior - among them - support of teacher authority, level of staff involvement, and social support of teachers.

A multiple correlation coefficient of +0.81 was found between the five specific aspects of administrative behavior and the general administrative behavioral evaluation (Executive Professional Leadership). The specific aspects which contributed most to the multiple correlation coefficient were (1) perceived level of social support of teachers, and (2) the perceived level of staff involvement. These two specific aspects offered as good an evaluation of the general administrative behaviors as all five independent variables combined. The Perceived Level of Social Support of teachers was found to be the best single predictor of Executive Professional Leadership. All of the five

---

[16]Harvey Goldman and James E. Heald, "A Study of The Teacher-Administrator Relationship and the Influence of Need Patterns." (East Lansing, Michigan: Office of Research and Publications, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1966).

[17]Harvey Goldman and James E. Heald, "Teacher Expectations of Administrative Behavior," Educational Administration Quarterly, IV, No. 3 (Autumn, 1968), p. 29.

Independent variables except perceived support of teachers' authority correlated significantly with one another.

The Trask Study (1962)[18]

Trask's study describes the dilemma presented to the principals in one school system by professional and bureaucratic requirements relative to supervision and suggests some of the methods which principals employ to resolve the dilemma. Each resolution facilitates the principal's fulfilling to some extent the expectations of both the teachers and the superintendent. The adaptations which the principal makes in supervising teachers are:

(1) He supervises teachers but does so by suggestion and advice rather than by exercise of authority (Trask does not make it clear whether she means 'formal' or 'informal' authority).

(2) He accommodates the method and content of the supervision to his own qualifications relative to those of the teacher.

(3) He redefines supervision to include a number of role activities so that he complies with the superintendent's recommended time allocation but does not oversupervise the teachers.

The Croft Study, 1965[19]

Defining supervision as the "efforts to stimulate, coordinate and guide the continued growth of teachers", John Croft and R. Jean Hills attempted to find out the state of supervisory practices in one school district. The researchers reached the following conclusions:

---

[18]Anne E. Trask, "Principals, Teachers and Supervision: Dilemmas and Solutions," Administrator's Notebook, XIII, No. 4 (December, 1964).

[19]John C. Croft, "The Principal as Supervisor: Some Descriptive Findings and Important Questions," Journal of Educational Administration, VI, No. 2 (October, 1968), pp. 162-172.

(1) Most of the teachers had not been observed very much by the principal.

(2) Instructional matters were infrequently discussed at staff meetings.

(3) Teachers were the main sources of help to other teachers regarding teaching performance.

(4) Teachers perceived the principal's major responsibility to be in the area of budget, coordination, policy, and public relations.

(5) In ranking factors to be considered in introducing changes in the school, the factor 'compatibility with professional standards' was ranked lowest by teachers.

Croft, in conclusion, raises some important issues:

(1) How can the principal best supervise in an organizational setting where teachers are professionals committed to autonomy and knowing what is best for their clients - the students?

(2) In an organizational setting where the principal has many other demands on his time besides observing teachers in the classroom, what kind of supervision should be employed to help the teacher in the time available?

(3) Is the same kind of supervision valuable or effective with every kind of teacher?

The Ziolkowski Study, 1965[20]

Ziolkowski, in a study of supervisory practices, analyzed the responses of teachers in twenty-four schools which were perceived by

---

[20]Erwin Harold Ziolkowski, "Practices in the Supervision of Instruction", The Canadian Administrator, V, No. 1 (October, 1967).

administrators as superior in promoting teacher effectiveness and the responses of teachers in twenty-four schools which were perceived by administrators as inferior in promoting teacher effectiveness in order to determine whether there were differences in

(a) the extent to which certain supervisory practices had been employed with the teachers over the preceding year, and

(b) the teachers' perceptions of the principal's general supervisory style in the two types of schools.

Findings of the Study

(1) In both types of schools, principals felt that the heavy demands of teaching and other duties hindered them from being adequately involved in supervision.

(2) Two-thirds of the teachers in the sample reported having received no formal classroom visits from principals. Of those teachers visited, sixty-two per cent were on interim staff.

(3) Over ninety per cent of teachers reported having observed no demonstration lesson and a similar number reported that they had paid no visits to the classrooms of other teachers for the purpose of observing their methods.

(4) The less formal, short classroom visits made by principals in connection with other administrative routines were reported by over two-thirds of the teachers.

Differences between superior and inferior schools on group supervisory practices:-

1. Teachers in superior schools perceived that a higher degree of importance was attached to discussion in their staff

meetings of topics directly related to improvement of teaching than was perceived by teachers in inferior schools.

2. Approximately sixty per cent of teachers in superior schools compared to thirty per cent of the teachers in inferior schools, reported the appointment of one or more committees to study problems related to teaching and curricula.

Teachers' perceptions of principals in superior schools differed significantly from teachers' perceptions of principals in inferior schools.

The principal in the superior school was perceived to be

(1) more industrious,

(2) more keenly aware of what was going on,

(3) better prepared whenever he was expected to make some public presentation,

(4) more interested in teachers as individuals,

(5) more approachable in terms of the extent teachers could discuss problems freely with him,

(6) making a greater effort in planning the timetable to accommodate teachers' specialties,

(7) more teaching-involving in decision-making,

(8) more supportive of teacher authority,

(9) more supportive in providing teaching aids and materials,

(10) more aggressive in regard to curriculum study and development,

(11) more encouraging of innovations and new ideas.

Wilson, Byar, Shapiro and Schell[21]

In their book Sociology of Supervision, Wilson, Byar, et al. develop a new concept of supervision based on the rationale that "supervision - by conventional definition - is destined for extinction because of current erroneous assumptions about the needs and competence (or incompetence) of teachers as well as a persistent underestimation of the growing determination of school administrators to use more effective means of accelerating and supporting educational growth."[22] Their new concept is 'comprehensive planning'. Supervision is defined as "the art and science of designing the educational environment"[23] and an "institutional function generated by a constellation of inter-dependent roles".[24]

The authors stress the importance of analyzing inter-dependent roles. The supervisor traditionally has performed a personal role sandwiched between the teacher and the administrator. This personal role, by its very nature, was authoritarian and narrow:

> The supervisor, attached directly to the superintendent's office, but forced into direct contact with teachers, find himself in a confrontation that places him in an authoritarian role. Lacking the defined role and official sanction understood both "above" and "below" the image he has of his own position, he falls into giving direct personal assistance to teachers, especially the beginners, the isolates, the incompetents, and the malcontents.... Omitted from serious supervisory concern are the teachers with sufficient training, experience and local prestige. They have

---

[21] L. Craig Wilson, T. Madison Byar, Arthur S. Shapiro, and Shirley H. Schell, Sociology of Supervision: An Approach to Comprehensive Planning in Education. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon), 1969.

[22] Ibid., Preface, p. ix.

[23] Ibid., p. 3.

[24] Ibid., p. 14.

> earned a sought after, but basically undesirable independence which is both autonomous and anonymous. The supervisor who has become important to the marginal teacher only, assumes that where there is no plea for help there is no apparent need for his services....[25]

The supervisor's alternative to performing a personal role between teacher and administrator is to "analyze the companion roles of teaching and administration in view of a possible reconstruction"[26] of the educational environment.

The supervisory function of reconstructing teaching and administrative roles is appropriate to the changing needs of school personnel. Teachers today, in contrast to teacher characteristics of a few decades ago, are recruited from all segments of society, are better educated, more professionally oriented, and are moving into the mainstream of community life.. Teachers are asking for an increase in their professional responsibilities as teachers, alteration of job descriptions, teaching schedules and physical plant characteristics. School administrators, too, "are being drawn from a larger segment of society, making career choices earlier and finding more opportunities for truly aggressive intellectual and creative roles" and "pressures are mounting for structural and organizational change to relieve the restrictions on individual and group creativity and initiative".[27] The changing needs of teachers and administrators require comprehensive planning.

The heir to the planning function is the supervisor, wherever he is found, because neither the administrator nor the teacher has

---

[25] Ibid., p. 19.

[26] Ibid., p. 14.

[27] Ibid., p. 21.

time to plan comprehensive school designs. The chief tasks of the supervisor as planner will be the removal of structural impediments to teaching and learning, the clarification of purposes and facilitation of decision-making to promote continuous institutional growth.